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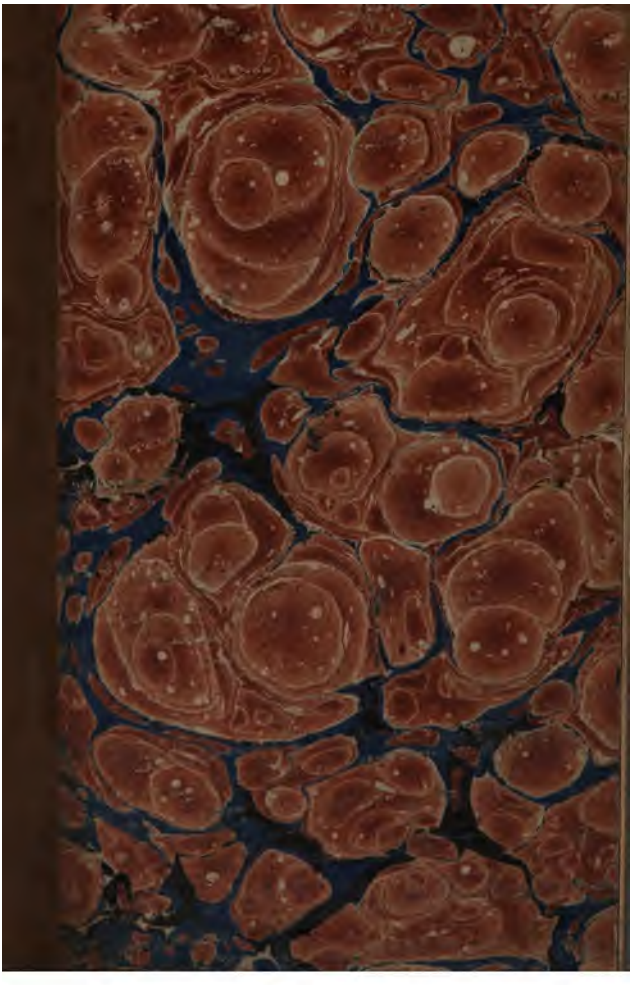

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# THE CHURCH'S

# TRIALS AND DELIVERANCE:

OR,

## Preparation for Suffering for the Truth.

FIRST INSERTED IN THE "PROTESTANT ANNUAL, FOR 1841," AND SINCE ENLARGED.

BY THE REV. E. BICKERSTETH,

RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

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LONDON:

FRANCIS BAISLER, 124, OXFORD STREET.

1841.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

# PREFACE.

HAVING been earnestly requested to reprint the following Practical Remarks separately, though they have already appeared in "the Protestant Annual for 1841, and in the author's "Restoration of the Jews," he complies with that request, in the hope that the attention of his fellow Christians may be more awakened to the present situation of the Church of Christ, and that they may be assisted in attaining a spirit of watchfulness and prayer. He adds also the following extract from the introductory remarks prefixed to the work on "the Restoration of the Jews," as to the difficulties in the way of our faith.

WEAKNESS OF FAITH IN THE PROMISED SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD and Saviour, is cha-

racteristic of the present state of the Church. The first Christians were so full of eager anticipation of it, that they needed a check. (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2.) We are so unbelieving tha we need the most awakening admonition. (Rev. xvi. 15.) After the long cessation of miraculous interference with the ordinary course of events, and after the lengthened continuance of the season of grace for 1800 years, such an interposition is so contrary to our habits and experience, and the common facts of history; so overwhelming and so surprising, that it is a great difficulty now to realize the plain scriptural testimony. We are also assured, that the ordinary transactions of life will go on to the last, *they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.* (Luke xvii. 28, 30.) The prophecies of the restoration of the Jews are intimately connected with this great and plainly revealed event, which is so offensive to the world.

*Hence Christians* have by no means yet

given that close attention to those prophecies, and that full confidence in them, which they justly claim from the plainness and extent of the scripture testimony, and the unutterably important events connected in God's word with the restoration of Israel. If there be reason to think, as there is, that their restoration is clearly predicted, and is near at hand, and if with it be explicitly connected *a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation* (Dan. xii. 1), and a change in the dispensations of God both towards Jews and Gentiles, and the overthrow of all wickedness, and the filling the earth with truth and righteousness, then may this subject justly claim the most earnest attention of all the people of God. And if beyond all this, there be connected with the restoration of Israel, as there clearly is, a resurrection of the just, a visible appearance and return of Christ to our earth, and the full establishment of his universal kingdom, then are we still more urgently called to study what God has revealed for our use on this subject.

Nor let us be surprised that COMPARATIVELY FEW BELIEVE THESE THINGS; but rather therein discern more clearly the reality of that scripture testimony, which corresponds so closely to the present state of men's minds. Antichrist and his followers are expressly to deny that our LORD IS COMING (*ερχομενον*) in the flesh. (2 John 7.) The wordly part of the church is scoffingly to throw it off with the inquiry, WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING? (2 Peter iii. 4.) His own ministers and servants are to say, at least in the *heart*, MY LORD DELAYETH HIS COMING (Matt. xxiv. 48), and even the wise virgins SLEPT till the cry was made, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh.* (Matt. xxv. 5, 6.) Can any thing more exactly describe the real, but the most dangerous situation of unbelief and lethargy in which men now are on this subject, and from which it is the great duty of the faithful watchmen to rouse them? Another kind of sore temptation, UNBELIEF, will however, in the hour of trial, assail even GOD'S own servants. While they are crying day and night for

deliverance, they will be tempted, from the great triumph of *that wicked*, then *revealed* (2 Thess. ii. 8), to doubt of the speedy return of our Lord, and of their full deliverance, *when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* Against this temptation we are guarded and strengthened by the assurance, *he will avenge them speedily.* (Luke xviii. 7, 8.*)

THE PAST FAILURE OF ANTICIPATIONS, CONFIDENTLY GATHERED FROM PROPHECY, is, perhaps, the most serious difficulty in the way of the faith of him who is well acquainted with the precipitate expectations of former ages. It has been, with some show of reason, objected, that MEN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN EXPECTING A CRISIS OF TERRIBLE DISASTER, and have again and again been found to be false alarmists. No doubt this is a just reason for great humility and modesty in our pre-anticipations of *particular times and minuter*

* The author must refer to the 5th and 6th Chapters of his Practical Guide to the Prophecies for the full scriptural evidence of the coming of our Lord before the Millennium.

*events.* Let us be taught this at least by such an objection. But there is another lesson to be gathered from these fore-anticipations of the last tribulation, thus common to all classes and to every age. It is not this, to throw aside all watchfulness and care for readiness, in the idea that there will be no such thing as that which the holy scriptures have plainly predicted; but this rather is the lesson taught us, more carefully, minutely and fully to search into the scriptural testimony concerning it. The holy scriptures give us sure and infallibly true information both as to the nature of it, and as to the times and seasons, and as to the blessed result in the universal triumph of the kingdom of Christ. Thus all those coming shadows of future events, however dark or dreadful, however alarming and surprising, beyond what our earth has ever yet witnessed, will only lead us to that calm and steady faith in the Divine Redeemer, and his control and guid-*ance of all, to* a full issue of blessedness and *glory, which will* enable us, according to his

direction, to *lift up our heads* in the absolute assurance that *our redemption draweth nigh.*

There is a worldly appearance of wisdom in being silent, which is not real wisdom. It is not the wisdom of God's children, standing alone as witnesses for his truth, but the wisdom of going with the greatest number. It is not the wisdom of that faith which *is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;* but the wisdom of not supposing any thing likely to take place that is out of the ordinary course of sight, sense, and experience, though the scriptures have expressly revealed it. It is, in short, the burying of all lively faith in the tomb of the mere common sense of the world. We see its issues in rationalism, Neologianism, and infidelity, but many see not the commencement of the downward path.

We cannot enter into the common reasoning: Suppose nothing comes of what you anticipated, either of remarkable judgments on the wicked, or remarkable blessings on the righteous, your reputation will suffer

We reply, that we had better be called foolish by the world, than be found by the Lord of all unprepared for the event itself. We reply, we have not desired the woeful day. (Jer. xvii. 16.) We had infinitely rather have Jeremiah's spirit of ardent desires for all good, though without any warrant and against all warrant of true prediction (Jer. xxviii. 6), than Jonah's spirit of grief, that predicted judgment was not executed (Jonah iv.) at the time when he expected, but actually delayed, and in the time of grace prolonged, on the repentance of the people. But it is real selfishness and hatred, not love, to withhold painful truth. A Christian with any thing of the divine mind can have no pleasure in the death of sinners. (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) Would to God, indeed, that the Gentile churches would follow Daniel's counsel to Nebuchadnezzar, *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.* (Dan. iv. 27.) Oh that it

might yet be! Let us labour for it to the last, and pray for it fervently, and neither prayers nor labours shall be fruitless of unspeakable blessings. Not merely Daniel himself, but his people also, were delivered from Babylon.

We reply further, *Let God be true, and every man a liar.* (Rom. iii. 4.) We will go on in watchfulness and preparation to the end, acknowledging our ignorance, but obeying all the Lord's directions, and still taking heed to the sure word of prophecy, as a light given us by God himself. If Abraham, when he went to Mount Moriah in pursuance of God's command, to offer Isaac for a burnt-offering, had been told how impossible it is this promised seed can inherit the land, he would have replied, *God was able to raise him up even from the dead.*) Heb. xi. 19). Let us then, in the darkest seasons, obey the command of God, and be waiting for our Lord's return. Let us, following the faith of Abraham, whatever may be the difficulties, have entire confidence in the plain statements of scripture,

and the omnipotent power of Him with wh
all things are possible. When the first p
mise was given, *the seed of the woman sh*
*bruise* the serpent's *head*, and afterwards m
fully interpreted.—*Behold, a virgin shall c*
*ceive and bear a son, and shall call his na*
*Immanuel*—how unlikely its fulfilment, af
the lapse of four thousand years from its fi
delivery in the garden of Eden. But *in*
*fulness of time God sent forth his Son, mad*
*a woman, made under the law, to redeem th*
*that were under the law, that we might rece*
*the adoption of sons.* (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) The ful
ment of this promise stands as a sign that
other promises shall be fulfilled: it is a s
pledge that not one, however long delay
however supernatural, however opposed
all human ideas of probability, shall ultimat
fail of its entire, complete, and exact ful
ment. HAVE FAITH IN GOD!

EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

*Watton Rectory, March* 17, 1841.

# THE CHURCH'S

# TRIALS AND DELIVERANCE.

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THE circumstances of the times are more and more bringing faithful Protestants again into full conflict with all the adversaries of *the faith once delivered to the saints.* In this conflict we are exhorted to *contend earnestly.* We contend indeed for the truth of God, *the common salvation,* the rich inheritance which God has freely given to the sons of men; and by the grace of God we know that we shall be *more than conquerors through him that loved us.* Though the war be sharp and prolonged, may we only the more *wax valiant in the fight,* till we turn *the armies of the aliens to flight!* The stirring events of these days call upon Christians to take the whole armour of God; and *his truth shall be our shield and buckler in the evil day.* (Psalm xci. 4.)

There is one part of the duty of the church which has, hitherto, been little regarded.

From the extraordinary peace which God has given to the world, a period of quiet clearly predicted before the last troubles, (1 Thess. v. 2, 3. Rev. vii. 1; viii. 1,) Christians have not had their attention directed, as the earlier church had, to the duty and privilege of suffering for Christ.

But as the predicted trials are manifestly drawing nearer, my object will be in this paper to lead Christians to prepare and be ready for them, that they may be enabled to withstand every temptation, and become the largest blessings in those trials to their country, their fellow-Christians, and their fellow-men.

That TRIALS ARE BEFORE US must be obvious to every reflecting mind, acquainted with the actual state of the Christian world, and with the word of God.

What is the state of THE CHRISTIAN WORLD? It is probable that a number considerably exceeding two hundred millions are now living on the earth, who have been baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. What is the spiritual condition of these millions? Let us classify them, and glance at their state.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Eastern churches, | 6 millions. |
| 2 | The Greek church, | 42 millions. |
| 3 | The Romanists, | 100 millions. |
| 4 | The Protestants, | 60 millions. |

There are, we may well hope, in the worst of these classes, thousands who worship the Father in spirit and in truth; the number is known only to Him *who seeth in secret*, and is probably far larger than many a desponding heart would imagine, and that even in those we are ready to view as the darkest parts of the earth. But still the actual state of the *Christian world*, as proved by the facts that are open and evident, is manifest. *By their fruits we know* the false teachers, and there are sins *open beforehand, going before to judgment.*

The Eastern Churches have longest had the truth; and what is their spiritual condition? While we have to thank God that amidst enormous oppressions and injuries from the Mahommedan scourge, they have retained the name of Christ and the early creeds of the church, and have also suffered contumely of all kinds and degrees for that name which they bear; yet, alas! whether we view Jacobites, Armenians, or Nestorians, they have, as a body, sunk into outside worship, the adoration of pictures, and confidence in saints; and are to a large extent adhering to lying vanities, trusting in the wooden cross, and the merest shreds and forms of religion. They are also living in the grossest ignorance of Divine truth, and by all kinds of wickedness are constantly dishonouring the name of

Christ. The Saracen woe chiefly affected them, but *they repented not*, and they are now fearfully like that rejected *earth which beareth thorns and briers, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.*

The Greek Church, including the established church in the Russian empire, is a large proportion of the Christian world. There is much of God's truth in different branches of the Greek church. They hold the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creed, and they have separated from the Man of Sin; though they retain, alas! many of the evils of that apostasy, using paintings and varied superstitions in their worship, and having, as is too evident, to a prodigious extent the name only of Christians. Christianity in the Greek church, which had before lost its purity and power in those professing it, became, from the time of the Turkish woe, as it were, slain, through the countries that formed the third empire. (Rev. ix. 18.)

The Romanists number the largest proportion in any single class of Christians in connexion with the profession of the Christian faith, and there are many of the true people of God among them. (Rev. xviii. 4.) The European kingdoms still chiefly belong to them. In Austria, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Sardinia, Naples, Bavaria, Tuscany, and the Papal States, Popery is the do-

minant religion; though more or less wasted and crippled by the revolutions of the last fifty years in every state. But have Romanists been taught by the judgments on the Eastern churches to repent? No. *The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the work of their hands, that they should not worship devils and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood.* There have since descended upon them five of the vials of God's wrath, but they have *blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.* (Rev. xvi. 11.)

PROTESTANTS have now in their churches the chief vigour and purity of the Christian faith; and in the British Isles and the United States, and in Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, as well as in other countries, great numbers of devoted servants of Christ have not defiled their garments, and are glorifying the name of Christ by their faith, hope, and love. But the great mass of Protestants, even in the most favoured countries, with an awful accumulation of guilt, sinning against the revived light of Divine truth which had visited them, and all the solemn warnings of judgments on the Eastern churches by the Saracen woe, on the Greek churches by the Turkish woe, on the Roman churches by the five vials of wrath poured on them, and on

Mahommedan lands by the sixth vial poured on the river Euphrates, seem to have sinned before God with eminent and peculiar guilt. Oh, let us remember our real guilt is, as we stand in the sight of Him who judges men according to the means which they have of knowing and serving him. The unclean spirits that are now abroad through all the kingdoms of the Roman empire, with their unparalleled spread and activity—Jesuits, Revolutionists, and Infidels—shew very manifestly the corrupt state both of the Roman and the Protestant churches. And indeed we may expect the greatest and most daring wickedness to be manifested where the fullest light and love have been perseveringly rejected.

And what says the word of God to this? I speak to those who admit the Protestant application of the Revelation; who do not, because of difficulties in interpretations, in the spirit of the English Infidel Gibbon, and the French Infidel Volney, reject prophetical truth, as they rejected Christian truth; who believe, with their Protestant forefathers, that Babylon and the Man of Sin, and the mystery of iniquity, describe the Pope and Popery.

To such it must be evident, events have already largely fulfilled the book of Revelation, and that all these corruptions of Christianity were foreseen. To such it is generally evident that the sixth vial is now pouring out on the

Turkish empire, and that the seventh vial brings that revolution which is described as *a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.* This harmonizes with those oft-repeated testimonies of the prophets and our Lord, (Isa. xxvi. 20, 21. Jer. xxx. 7. Dan. xii. 3. Joel, ii. 2. Matt. xxiv. 21. Luke, xxi. 25,) of *a time of trouble* before his return *such as never was since there was a nation to that same time; no, nor ever shall be.*

And the righteousness as well as the necessity of these judgments will be clear when we remember, that peculiar light afforded (Matt. x. 15,) and previous warning rejected, very greatly increase the guilt of men. The Israelites, neglecting the warnings which the judgments on Egypt had afforded them, were overthrown in the wilderness. (Psalm cvi. 21—27.) When Judah continued in idolatry, unwarned by the captivity of Israel, the Lord accounted Judah more guilty than Israel. (Jer. iii. 8—11.) For the same reason Belshazzar was punished more severely than Nebuchadnezzar, because he knew God's dealings with his father, and did not humble himself. (Dan. v. 22.) In the same way, as just noticed, the judgments on the Eastern churches by the Mahommedan woes were a warning to us of the Western, and the vials poured out on Papal and Mahommedan

empires to us Protestants. All which warnings and the instruction then given, slighted, and disregarded, increase the sins of our impenitence, unbelief, and high-mindedness, (Rom. xi. 20, 21. Rev. xvi. 9, 11,) accumulate the guilt of past ages on the churches on which the judgment finally comes, (Matt. xxiii. 35. Rev. xviii. 24,) and leave their situation without remedy, (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.)

We may take it then for an assured truth, that trials of a specially severe character are before the Christian world, continuing impenitent, and that they are near to us. It is clear that there are *a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, which stood before the throne, and before the Lamb*, of whom it shall be said, *these are they who came out of the great tribulation*, (της θλιψεως της μεγαλης.) Our Lord does not return till this tribulation has come. (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30. Luke xxi. 25.) If we look for reigning, we must also look for previous suffering. (Matt. xx. 20—23. 2 Tim. ii. 21.)

But do the scriptures give any particulars of THE NATURE OF THESE TRIALS? This may be seen in the various predictions of them.

*Generally* we may observe, in the words of *Dean Woodhouse*, "Throughout the whole

of the prophetical Scripture, a time of retribution and vengeance on God's enemies is announced. It is called *the day of the Lord —the day of wrath and slaughter—of the Lord's anger, visitation, and judgment—the great day—the last day*.....At the same time it is to be observed, that this kind of description, and the same expressions which are used to represent this great day, are also employed by the prophets to describe the fall and punishment of particular states and empires; of Babylon by Isaiah, (chap. xiii.) of Egypt by Ezekiel, (xxx. 2—4; xxxii. 7, 8,) of Jerusalem by Jeremiah and Joel, and by our Lord, (Matt. xxiv.) In many of these prophecies the description of the calamity, which is to fall on a *particular* state or nation, is so blended and intermixed with that general destruction which in the final days of vengeance will invade all the inhabitants of the earth, that the industry and skill of our ablest interpreters have been scarcely equal to separate and assort them. Hence it has been concluded by judicious divines, that these partial prophecies and particular instances of the Divine vengeance, whose accomplishment we know to have taken place, are presented to us as types, certain tokens, and forerunners of some greater event which is not disclosed *in them*. To the dreadful time of *universal* vengeance they all appear to look for-

ward, beyond their first and most immediate object. Little indeed can we doubt that such is to be considered the use and application of these prophecies, since we see them thus applied by our Lord and his apostles. (Matt. i. 22, 23; xxvii. 9. John xv. 25; xix. 36, 37. Acts ii. 20, 27; iii. 19, 22, 24. Heb. iv. 7, 8; x. 27, 37. Rom. ii. 5. Gal. iv. 24. Ephes. v. 14. 2 Thess. ii. 3, &c. 2 Peter iii. 2—14.) One of the most remarkable of these prophecies is that splendid, or rather most awful, one of Isaiah xxxiv., the importance and *universality* of which is to be collected from the manner in which it is introduced. .....It represents the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of the recompences of Sion; it descends on all nations and their armies.....The hosts of heaven are dissolved, the heavens are rolled together as a scroll of parchment; the stars fall like a leaf from a vine, or a fig from its tree. And yet *Idumea* is mentioned by the prophet as the particular object of vengeance. Such seems to be the typical completion and primary application of this prophecy, but it has evidently a more sublime and future prospect, and in this sense *the whole world* is its object..... Such prophecies have evidently received their partial accomplishment, yet as evidently look forward to a more full and glorious consummation. They are not become a dead letter,

they unite in pointing to some grander object which all such prophecies describe, even the universal and final overthrow of the enemies of Christ. And they encourage us to look with certain assurance to the completion of the predictions in their final sense, since we have already seen them fulfilled typically."*

Some of the most STRIKING PARTICULARS connected with the last trials, and taking place in that day of the Lord's which *is as a thousand years*, SEEM—for except as the word of God is clear and express, far be it from the writer to speak positively on unfulfilled events, and especially on the order of them—I say they SEEM to be these:

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL SHALL IN THESE TROUBLES BE RESTORED TO THEIR OWN LAND. On this the prophet Daniel, xii. 1, is explicit. In the midst of the trials, when the enemy is coming in like a flood, *the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.* (Is. lix. 19.) The Jews shall be remarkably restored: and this itself will be *as an ensign lifted up on the mountains*, and as the blowing of *a trumpet to all the inhabitants of the world and dwellers upon the earth.* (Isa. xviii.) There are two stages in their restoration; the first,

* See Woodhouse's Apocalypse Translated and his Note on the Double sense of Prophecy, p. 172—174.

A GRADUAL AND PREPARATORY RESTORATION in a self-righteous and persecuting state, (Isa. xxvii. 12; lxvi. 1—10,) liberalizing and infidel, (Ezek. xx. 32, 33,) and anticipating their peace and health as come, (Jer. viii. 15. Isa. lxvi. 3.) This is the signal to the nations that the mystery of God is about to finish. (Dan. xii. 7. Rev. x. 7.) On this restoration the last dregs of their bitter JEWISH TRIBULATION are drunk up by the nation, through the unprovoked jealousy, hatred, and confederacy of the Gentile nations waging war against them. (Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. Zech. xiii. 8, 9; xiv. 1, 2.) At length, in the progress of this day of Christ, and after the resurrection of his saints, THEIR MESSIAH and Deliverer APPEARS FOR THEM. Then the cup of trembling is taken out of their hand, and put into the hands of those that afflict them, (Isa. li. 17—23,) and passes over to the Gentiles, (Rev. xix.) THE FULL AND GLORIOUS RESTORATION of Israel is after their preparatory restoration; when the Jews join in the hallelujahs of the last triumph of the whole church of Christ, (Rev. xix.) on the return of our Lord.

THE TRIBULATION OF THE GENTILES commences with the 7th vial, and is the beginning of the third woe trumpet, or the last judgment, which is a lengthened period, including the general fire described by St. Pete

(Rev. xi. 14—18; xvi. 17—21. 2 Peter iii.) The remarkable union of these two is put before us by Isaiah lxvi. 22 24, and by our Lord, (Mark ix. 47—49.) After *the unclean spirits, like frogs, which come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet,* have done their polluting work, and *gone forth to the kings of the earth* and *of the whole world,* and the wicked have followed this evil voice—the result is to *gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.* When the seventh vial is poured out it is said, *there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.* This subdues not, however, the wickedness of men; it is still declared *they blasphemed God,* and then in the 19th chapter of Revelation we have their full overthrow. The images and figures and descriptions of this Gentile tribulation are some of the most awful passages in the prophetical writings. (Isa. xxiv. xxxiv. lxiii. Mal. iv. 2 Peter iii. Rev. xiv. 19, 20; xix.) Some of the particulars noticed in the sacred writings are *these:*—

THE RESTRAINTS NOW UPON THE WICKED

WILL BE REMOVED. Popery, that man of sin, could not manifest itself because, as the Thessalonians knew, the Roman government hindered it; *ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.* In due time the Roman government was removed, and the Man of Sin (whose type was Judas, the son of Simon, the son of perdition) opposed and exalted himself above all that is called God. But there is a further withholding of evil: *he who now letteth will let, until he be out of the way,* and then shall *that wicked,* or lawless one, the full grown Antichrist, like Judas, in his last stage, shew himself, and *be revealed* before his destruction. By the overthrow of governments, as in the Reign of Terror in France, the restraints on the wicked will be removed, and if other restraining influences be also withdrawn, we may easily suppose the enormous evils on every side that must then abound.

POPERY AS A SYSTEM OF RELIGION WILL BE STRIPPED BARE. *The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire.* (Rev. xvii. 6.) Thus Popery, as a system of iniquity, shall be manifested, and the powers of the earth shall really hate her. Much of this has had its beginning in the plundering of church property in many papal *countries.*

There will be A VISIBLE, SUDDEN, AND ENTIRE OVERTHROW OF THE SEAT OF THIS APOSTASY. Our Lord's prediction in Revelation is very plain. *Her plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be burned with fire; for strong is the Lord that judgeth her. In one hour is thy judgment come. With violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.* (Rev. xviii.) Infidelity may scoff at these statements. He who believes God's words will stand in awe of them; and such passages clearly shew a violent and sudden visitation from heaven, on the head and seat of the apostasy. And no wonder infidels scoff before hand, when even these judgments will not bring the kingdoms of this world to true repentance.

THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD SHALL after this MAKE OPEN WAR AGAINST OUR LORD CHRIST. The gatherings for this WAR seem already beginning to take place. The kings are gathered together by the *three unclean spirits which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.* (Rev. xvi. 14.) *These shall make war with the Lamb.* (Rev. xvii. 14.) The war itself is described in the 19th chapter.

ALL THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST UNITE TOGETHER AGAINST HIM IN THIS LAST WAR.

One passage may shew this. *I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse,* and against *his army: and the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet.*

Without entering into explanations of these predictions, the general aspect is sufficiently clear. They all shew a violent conflict and struggle yet to come, carried on by the enemies of our Lord against him and his people. The general tendency of all these predictions is clear, and their near approach to our times, must, to those who hold the Protestant interpretation of the Revelation, be manifest. THE FEARFUL ISSUE OF THESE CONFLICTS is an unparalleled vintage, *the great wine-press of the wrath of God,* (Rev. xiv. 18,) and an unparalleled supper, *the supper of the great God,* filling *all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven,* with the flesh of kings—captains—mighty men—*and all men both free and bond, both small and great.* (Rev. xix. 7, 8.)

Such are the plain predictions of the word of God, as to the day of tribulation yet to come, and they are here stated that the reader may see the special reason in these days for seeking to bring men to a prepared state for trials; and that Protestants who hold the *pure faith* of Christ, may be ready for the *peculiar difficulties* of this time, and be fully

blessed in them. Let us next consider, THE SITUATION OF GOD'S CHILDREN IN THESE LAST TRIALS.

There may probably be A SEALED CLASS (compare Ezek. ix. and Rev. vii.) remarkably and altogether preserved from these trials, possibly by an early death, (Isaiah lvii. 1, 2.) as Josiah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 28.)

MANY OF GOD'S SERVANTS WILL BE SHARERS IN THE TRIALS. As Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel shared the trials of the first captivity; as the first Christians, though preserved from the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, had suffered much previously (1 Thess. ii. 14), so we have reason to think the church, represented by that of Philadelphia, while preserved, will yet pass through *the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* It will be seen, by their burning lamps and readiness to go out to meet him, who are wise virgins and who are foolish. *Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.*

It is an awakening question put by our Lord, when he is speaking of the sufferings of his people under their last enemies, and *that God will* avenge them, nevertheless when *the Son of Man cometh*, shall he find faith on

*the earth?* As if the triumph of the adver
sary, and the delay of God's judgment an
their own sufferings, were such as to stagge
the faith of God's own elect. It is not, how
ever, asserted that their faith shall fail, but
is put as a solemn caution and warning of th
peculiarly aggravated nature of the tempt
tion, and a quickening call to faith, whateve
the trial may be, that we may hope again
hope to the end. A similar question occu
Matt. xx. 22. See also Matt. xv. 24—2
Mark ix. 23.

But in these trials there will be SUCH
REFUGE AS WILL REALLY SHELTER THE PRE
PARED SERVANTS OF CHRIST FROM EVI
This is often brought before us. In th
midst of the last troubles, the disciples
Christ are directed to *lift up* their *heads, fo*
their *redemption draweth nigh.* They ca
say, *God is our refuge and strength, a ver
present help in time of trouble.* They ar
charged, *Come, my people, enter thou into th
chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hid
thyself as it were for a little moment, until the in
dignation be overpast.* (Isa. xxvi. 20.) They ar
assured, *Because thou hast kept the word
my patience, I also will keep thee from th
hour of temptation.* And again: *The Lor
knoweth how to deliver the godly out of tempt
tion, and to reserve the unjust unto the day
judgment to be punished.*

But it is not merely a refuge and deliverance that will be provided; the tribulation itself will be A TIME OF UNSPEAKABLE AND SPECIAL ADVANTAGE TO THEM. In this great tribulation they *have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* They who now watch and pray, will then *be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.* We are solemnly assured, not only that that day shall not overtake them as a thief, and that they are not appointed to wrath; but also that they are appointed *to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.* In the darkest part of the tribulation they are assured thus: *Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord.* Such promises intimate, not merely a preservation, but a season of peculiar holiness and solemn joy to God's children at this time; a season which rapidly ripens and prepares the saints for their rapture to glory, without that separation of the spirit from the body which has hitherto taken place in the death of believers in general.

The day of tribulation will be THE DAY OF LARGE CONVERSION TO CHRIST. It will give striking advantages to the saints, for manifesting the blessedness of true religion. We

have many explicit statements that the time of these judgments will be the time of extended conversion of souls. The great multitude which no man can number, came out of it. (Rev. vii.) The last gatherings to the great supper are that the house may be filled. (Luke xiv. 23.) We are assured, *when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness.* (Isaiah xxvi. 9.) The great harvest of the church, possibly in itself a time of trial, precedes the full vintage of wrath. (Rev. xiv.) Just after Daniel mentions this great tribulation (Dan. xii. 1,) and the resurrection following it, he gives the most glowing of all the promises to those successful in labours for the spiritual good of others; *they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever.* This accords with that which he further predicts: *they that understand among the people shall instruct many, yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil many days.* Thus, as in the beginning, the blood of the martrys is the seed of the church.

By the great difference of the effects of these troubles, THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED SHALL BE *MANIFEST.* Now it is often difficult to ascertain the *real* character of men, and in distin

ishing we often make mistakes; then it ll be manifest as the sun at noon-day. Now *call the proud happy;* then the day comes *t shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, , and all that do wickedly, shall be as stub-*. Now men say, *What profit is it if we p God's ordinances?* then those who have ired the Lord will be spared as his dear ildren; and be as *his jewels*, while the folly the wicked *shall be manifest unto all men.* d *men shall return, and discern between the hteous and the wicked, between him that veth God and him that serveth him not.*

The CHARACTER AND SITUATION OF THE CKED UNDER THESE TRIALS is also brought fore us. There are those who will remain converted under these unequalled exhibi-ns of grace on the one hand, and judgment the other. As Luther once said, "I be-ve it will come to pass, that the greater and arer the light of the gospel is, the more cked the world will be." Their character ll become more and more desperately cked (1 Tim. iii. 13), and this wickedness re manifest to all. (Rev. xix. 19.) Even w, *after their hardness and impenitent heart, y treasure up to themselves wrath against day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous dgment of God.* It appears clear that the bulation of the seventh vial serves to sepa-*men into* their respective classes, and not

finally to destroy the wicked. When the great hail out of heaven falls upon the wicked, they do but *blaspheme God because of the plague of the hail.* (Rev. xvi. 21). It is the very mark of Antichrist, with his many followers, to *deny that Jesus is coming* (ερχομενον) *in the flesh.* (2 John 7.) Thus Pharaoh in Egypt grew more hardened with each successive judgment, till his last overthrow. They will go on to make war with the Lamb and his followers; and probably, will reduce the people of Christ to such extremities, as to make, as we have noticed, their faith ready to fail and their hope to faint. Their continued impunity, and the prolonged absence of the Lord, produces entire unbelief of his return at all in the world (2 Peter iii. 4); and the excess of suffering, and the delay of Divine vengeance on the wicked, causes despondency in God's people. Hence our Lord says, *Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth?* (Luke xvii. 7. 8.) And it is in this extremity of the church, I apprehend, and previous to the national conversion of Israel, that THE LORD DESCENDS FROM HEAVEN (1 Thes. iv. *16), and that* THE RESURRECTION GATHERING *AND TRANSLATION* OF THE SAINTS TAKES PLACE.

The saints, whether brought to Christ from among Jews or Gentiles, the first fruits unto God and the Lamb, the faithful remnant according to the election of grace, are greatly blessed, prepared, and sanctified in the last tribulation, are CHANGED AND TRANSLATED, and with THOSE RAISED FROM THEIR GRAVES ASCEND to the immediate presence of the Redeemer, and all are received to the heavenly habitations. The SAINTS then are JUDGED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS,* and have their lots assigned to them by their righteous Judge, in their blessed and heavenly and eternal kingdom. (Dan. xii. 2, 3, 13. Matt. xxv. 33, 40.)

The earth for a season seems left wholly to the unconverted; the Jewish nation, not yet truly converted, but self-righteous (Isa. lvxi.) and infidel, and the nominal church in its Laodicean state of wretched ignorance. After the first recovery of the wicked from their surprise at the translation of the saints, they, like the Egyptians, pursue their enmity; and especially manifest it towards the Jewish nation, in part restored to their own land. There are many predictions of this; see especially the last chapters of Isaiah and Zacha-

* The author has given his sentiments on the future resurrection and general judgment in his Practical *Guide to the Prophecies*. Sixth Edition, p. 280, 281, 289—296.

riah, the 38th and 39th of Ezekiel, and th
19th chapter of Revelation.

These attempts issue in THE RETURN O
OUR LORD WITH ALL HIS SAINTS TO OU
EARTH. (Zech. xiv. 5. Jude 14, 15. Rev. xi
14.) While the earth is covered with darknes
and gross darkness overspreads the nation
the true Light returns to Sion; the conve
sion of the Jewish nation, and the awful, an
immediate, and everlasting punishment b
fire of the living obstinately wicked, and the
being *cast alive into a lake burning with fi
and brimstone, to be tormented day and nigh
for ever and ever*, follow upon this return
(Rom. xi. 26.) The conversion of the Jewis
nations, and these direct judgments from Go
our Saviour on the wicked, end in that natio
becoming a fuller blessing to the rest of th
world, even than they have yet been. Whil
some of the Gentiles escaping, through th
forbearance of God, out of these last judg
ments, are sent *to the nations afar off, that hav
not heard the fame of Jehovah, neither hav
seen his glory.* (Isaiah lxvi. 19.) Thus, *th
nations of them which are saved shall walk i
the light of the* heavenly Jerusalem, and *th
kings of the earth bring their honour and glor
unto it.* The glorified saints reign in th
*millennial* kingdom with Christ; THE JUDG
MENT OF THE DEAD (Rev. xx. 12. Matt. xx
*41, 45), not* partakers of the first resurrect

takes place; and then the glorified host *reign for ever and ever* over a renovated and righteous world. (Rev. xxi. 1, 5; xxii. 5.) Thus finally, God's righteousness and grace, and all his good and holy dealings with the sons of men, will be made so clear, that he will be fully justified and glorified for ever by all creation.

Let us yet further for a moment glance at THE GLORY OF THE RISEN CHURCH OF CHRIST. Who can describe this! *If eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him* (1 Cor. ii. 9), or them that *wait for him* (Isa. lxiv. 4); and they are only revealed to us by his Spirit; what must be the blessedness and glory of a resurrection body, and a perfectly purified soul! What the blessedness of associating for ever only with those thus glorious, of sharing all their joys, and with them living always in that presence of our one Lord, where is fulness of joy! Who can tell what royalties we partake of in the heavenly kingdom, what priestly offices we are there honoured with, what the beauteous splendour of the heavenly Jerusalem is? What the Lord God giving light to his servants there shall be? Who can reach the height, or fathom the depth, or measure the length and breadth of the love of *our Immanuel*, and the glories of the mansions *he is preparing* for his faithful followers? See

the promises made to the overcomers in the seven churches, how they are added one to another, till the overcomers are raised to the highest throne of Immanuel's glory. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

I do not wonder at the almost extravagant desire of martyrdom in the early church, having full faith in these promises. The sufferings before us will restore this faith. To assist the reader's faith, let us consider SOME OF THE GREAT BENEFITS OF SUFFERING FOR THE TRUTH'S SAKE. Had we indeed only those words, *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake*, we might be sure that our Lord would not mislead us. But he has strengthened our faith by more distinctly and fully shewing how they are blessed.

The PURIFYING EFFECTS of tribulation are often set before us. Thus the apostle Peter says, *If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* And the apostle Paul tells the Hebrews, *No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which* are exercis

*thereby.* Similar statements occur frequently in the Holy Scriptures. Thus our Saviour was perfected, and we are to be perfected in a similar manner. (Luke vi. 40.) The fellowship of his sufferings is needful before we can be fully like him. Intense hatred of sin, and ardent love to God, and inward purity, are advanced most by sanctified afflictions. And how clearly are these things predicted by Daniel in the last days: *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.* (Dan. xii. 10.)

The VAST USEFULNESS TO OTHERS of faithful sufferings, is evident in the past history of the church. All its successes and triumphs have been thus attained. Our Saviour's sufferings preceded the numerous conversions to the early church; the apostolic sufferings, and those of the first martyrs preceded the establishment of religion in the Roman empire; the martyrdom of the witnesses before the Reformation, preceded their resurrection at the Reformation; the sufferings of the Reformers went before the establishment and enlargement of the Protestant churches. Men are generally blessed in the result as they have suffered for the truth, and few have been *largely blessed* without going through much *suffering.* Doubtless, then, the exceeding

grace given to faithful Christians, keeping them from the hour of temptation (Rev. iii. 10), and delivering them out of it (2 Peter ii. 9), will be a large blessing to multitudes in that tribulation. (Rev. vii. 14.) And as we have some intimations that there were those who repented during the progress of the deluge (1 Peter iii. 19), so may a countless multitude yet be brought to Christ through the fidelity given suffering Christians in the last days.

THE NATIONAL BENEFITS connected with the sufferings of Christians are very great. See what a candle Latimer and his brother Ridley kindled in Britain by their sufferings! Which of the prophets, apostles and martyrs have not, by their sufferings, helped ultimately to preserve and spread vital godliness among some at least in their own country? Jerusalem would have been preserved from the Chaldean invasion, if the Lord had found *a man to stand in the gap before him.* Ten righteous men would have preserved Sodom. We know not how far it may please God, BRITAIN may yet be spared in the last judgments, or raised out of them, greatly humbled and purified, through the faithfulness of British Christians, to the Lord Jesus Christ. How glorious an object is it for a Christian's *aim, to be a national* blessing in the highest *sense to our beloved* land! O may we covet

this happiness, and attain it by fidelity to Christ!

THE GLORIFYING OF GOD'S GREAT NAME is a yet higher aim which is set before us as a duty in the tribulation to come. This was the first and ardent desire of the Redeemer in commencing his last prayer with his disciples, *Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.* This desire consoled and strengthened him in all that was before him—*Father, glorify thy name.* We also are taught that in the last judgments, when the city of confusion is broken up, there shall be a remnant of whom it is predicted, *they shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the God of Israel in the isles of the sea.* How greatly was God glorified in Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, and their unflinching boldness before Nebuchadnezzar, and then in their wonderful preservation; in Daniel's faithfulness to his God, and his deliverance in the lion's den; in Peter's boldness before the council, and sufferings for the truth, and God's protection and deliverance; in Luther's firmness at Worms, and in the martyrdoms of the Reformation! Let God's glory be dearer to us *than life itself.* And in nothing is God's glory *more exhibited* than in the faith, patience,

peace, love, and holy triumph of his people over the sharpest sufferings. It shews so the truth of his gospel and the excellence of his grace in supporting a feeble creature like man, as to compel the attention of the world, and win many a precious soul to Christ. It is such an honouring of the truth of his word against all the terrors of the world, the flesh and the devil, such a seeing of him that is invisible as utterly confounds all the devices of Satan and the short-sighted wisdom of men of this world. The tide of triumphant wickedness is resisted and turned entirely back by the stability of the faith of suffering Christians.

OUR FINAL BLESSEDNESS AND GLORY ARE AUGMENTED THROUGH SUFFERINGS FOR THE TRUTH. What is the grand theme of the rapturous Hallelujahs above? The sufferings of the Lamb—*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.* What is it that obtains the great reward in heaven? Suffering most for his sake below—*Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake; rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven. What works out* for us *the more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?* Is it not our light *affliction, which is but for a moment?* The

prosperity of the wicked over the righteous, which now so pains us, is short and only just precedes their fall. The woman is last seen *drunken with the blood of the saints*, before it is divinely determined, *how much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.* The saints crying under the altar are quieted by this remarkable direction, *That they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled;* and then are they glorified together. (See Heb. xi. 40.) *If we suffer we shall also reign with him.* Look at all the promises; they are made to the victors in the battle, and *they overcame the accuser of the brethren, by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.* See how all the worthies enumerated in the 11th of Hebrews attained their glory, and then observe Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith crowning the whole, and enduring the cross, that he might enter his joy.

Thus the cross is the way to the crown; affliction is the path to glory. This made Paul, looking forward to his future rejoicing, triumphantly testify, *Yea, and if I be offered* (or poured out) *upon the service and sacrifice of your faith I joy and rejoice with you all. Let me then stir up my own heart and yours,*

Christian reader, every where now to prepare for the cross, not as something that we cannot escape, but as a gracious appointment of privilege and eternal gain. What shall we look back upon hereafter with most joy? Upon this, that by the grace of God we were enabled to make sacrifices of things seen for the sake of things unseen, that we walked not by sight but by faith, that we endured hardness and sufferings for Christ, and so were made blessings to our fellow-men, brought many sons to glory, and were fully ripened for that glory.

The full blessedness of all creation follows the glory of the church: *the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness* is the result of God's loving-kindness to men, and *the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*

Such are the happy effects of sufferings for the truth. We will conclude with some PRACTICAL LESSONS to be drawn from this subject.

ARM YOURSELVES WITH THE MIND OF CHRIST about suffering. To be like him is the glory of a Christian. He foresaw with perfect distinctness and foreknowledge all the bitter cup which he had to taste. He knew *his sorrows* beforehand far more distinctly *than we can* possibly know any sufferings *through which* we have to go, and yet he

withheld not himself from his overwhelming baptism, and was only straitened till it was accomplished. Amidst all temptations, from friends and from foes, from the world and the devil, and from those infirmities of our nature, with the feeling of which he was touched,—look at the invincible firmness, patience, meekness, gentleness, love and faithfulness of our divine Lord. Truly we must look much to Jesus, if we would be armed with his mind. He will give us his Spirit; he will strengthen us with his grace. He will impart to us his mind.

BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY THE PAST EXPERIENCE OF ALL GOD'S CHILDREN. Suffering for the truth, from the time of righteous Abel, has ever been the way by which God has led his people to final triumph and to full blessedness. Thus St. James (v. 1—11), speaking of the trials of God's servants in the last days says, *Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure.* Their faithfulness in speaking in the name of the Lord brought on them all their affliction, but thence came all their glory. (2 Cor. iv. 17.) It is the meek and holy spirit of a believer, joined with his unflinching confession of the *truth, that disquiets* the conscience of sinners *and provokes* their wrath; for it interferes

with the easy enjoyment of all the lusts of this world. Nor will the meekness of Moses, the tenderness of Jeremiah, the wisdom of Paul, and the combination of every grace and perfection in our Lord Jesus, screen the faithful servant of the Most High from this enmity. But the more the world hates us for fidelity to God's truth, the more the Lord himself loves us and will honour us, so that great shall be our reward in heaven.

NOW GATHER SCRIPTURAL TRUTH that may be as oil in our lamps FOR THE DAY OF NECESSITY. A man unacquainted with all that God has foretold in his word of events yet to come, and expecting things only to go on as they have done, must be taken unawares by them (Luke xxi. 34), and so wholly unprepared. While he who has attended to God's warnings, and treasured up all his gracious statements of what has to take place, will not be taken by surprise, but will be found ready and provided against the evil day. The prepared Christian, who remembers what Christ has beforehand told him, will be able, amidst all the unusual shakings and convulsions of that day, and the terrors of his fellow-men, to lift up his head. He knows the end of the Lord, he sees his *redemption and* that of the whole earth *approaching, and* with this hope he can be *full of confidence*, peace, and joy.

CHEERFULLY ENDURE THE PRESENT CROSS TO BE TAKEN UP FOR THE TRUTH. After St. Paul had expressed, in the last epistle which he wrote, his tender attachment to Timothy, he thus exhorts him: *Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God*, shewing him his privilege and his strength for it. There is each day some sacrifice of ease and inclination to be made, some restraint to be put upon appetite and the love of pleasure, some mortification of our high-mindedness, something disagreeable to flesh and blood to be endured, something laborious and toilsome to be effected, by acting on Christian principles. By faithfulness in these things, we shall become inured and habituated to greater trials, and so meet for a larger blessing. *I die daily*, was the experience of one of the noblest sufferers in the school of Christ. That this is our only safe course is clear, from the plain direction of our Lord, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* It is easy to think that we may be firm and valiant for the truth in a great trial, and yet neglect present self-sacrifice; but the best means of being firm then, is by now beginning a course of firmness, and self-denial, and self-restraint. *Observe how the* self-denial of Daniel and *his companions* in private preceded their pub-

lic boldness and firmness in standing for the truth. (Compare Daniel i. with iii. and v.)

ASK FOR GRACE TO BE BOLD IN THE CONFESSION OF TRUTH. This did the apostles, and they were heard. (Acts iv. 29.) True it is this boldness will expose us to ridicule and bitter hatred of evil men; true it is even Christians may blame us, and they of our own household think we carry matters much too far; true it is we may have thereby to suffer and be shamefully entreated, even though we had the wisdom, love, and humility of Paul, yet still let us be *bold in our God to speak the gospel of God, with much contention.* Oh how great a grace is given to a Christian, when he is enabled to look off the praise of man as a small thing, and one to be despised, when put in competition with the praise of God; and with large love to all, with humility, and patience, and simplicity of mind, to seek only God's approval. This will give us real boldness, as it did to Peter and John, before all the rulers of the Jews (Acts iv. 13, 19), and so make us large blessings to his church. The hope of the Redeemer's return is peculiarly calculated to embolden and strengthen even the timid and weak believer *faithfully to confess* present and needful *truth.*

*BE WATCHFUL.* How often is this direc-

tion given by our Lord, in the gospel, with reference to these days! and it is repeated from heaven for this very period. (Rev. iii. 2; xvi. 15.) Let us take care then that our garments are not defiled. Errors and heresies abound on every side. The three unclean spirits are all abroad, seeking to gather men into the armies that war against the Lamb: Jesuits, Revolutionists and Infidels shew to enlightened Christians whose they are and to whom they belong. Many have been defiled, and when once the defilement is received how difficult is the removal? *Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.* This is the special charge and watchword of the Christian army for this season. But not only have we to watch against errors, and temptations, and sins, but to watch for every opportunity of glorifying God and benefiting men, seizing promptly each occasion of doing good. And, above all, we have to watch and wait for the coming of the Redeemer,—*Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.* Happy those wise Christians to whom this is a blessed hope, for which they are looking, to whom he comes as the expected Bridegroom, and then they enter with him to the marriage.

*Be diligent in seeking to save souls.*

*The words of our* Saviour should especially

now be our purpose and guide day by day. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.* Soon the present opportunities of spreading divine truth, freedom and liberty of action, and means of reaching all quarters of the earth, as far as regards the exertions of the children of God, may be greatly impeded or wholly taken from us. Soon we may be despoiled of the many advantages we now have for doing good to the bodies and souls of men, but if we now scatter the seed, it may be harrowed in, even in those days, and ultimately bring a glorious harvest, in which we shall for ever rejoice. *He that winneth souls is wise.* Let this be the wisdom which we choose and prefer.

HOWEVER TRIED, BE FAITHFUL, IN THE ASSURED HOPE OF VICTORY, TO THE END. If, in the last appearance of the harlot, she is *drunken with the blood of the saints;* if the great *war with the Lamb* is yet to take place; if the saints are to be *made white, purified and tried:* if *the elect* are to *cry day and night* before they are avenged, we may justly anticipate great temptations to unfaithfulness. Let us think of these things beforehand, that *when they* really come, being ready, we may *stand, and having done all, stand.* Let the cheering promise, *Be thou faithful* unto death,

*and I will give thee a crown of life*, animate us in the darkest hours. To have nothing but love in our hearts and our lives to our fellowmen, even to those who hate us most, and yet for this to endure unto a bloody death, striving against sin (Heb. xii.); here indeed we are conformed to Christ, and if it be the hardest, yet it is the shortest path to highest blessedness and glory, and that for ever.

And that you may choose and delight in this way, we say at the close of all—BE ANIMATED BY THE BRIGHT HOPE OF A GLORIOUS AND EVERLASTING REDEMPTION. This is what the whole creation is waiting for. All the exhibitions of evil in our world, will, through the wonder working mercy of our God, be overruled to this end. In what a glowing strain, hoping for this, the apostle says, *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us; for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.* The apostle proceeds to declare the groans and travail of all creation, and even of the sons of God, waiting for their redemption. Well may it be so, for how great are the glories of that redemption! The recovery of all creation from its ruin through sin; the earth, and the creatures on it delivered from the curse

(Rom. viii. 19—22); the resurrection of the body from the grave, and the deliverance of the soul from all bondage and taint of sin, and its perfected likeness to God; the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven, his kingdom come, his name every where hallowed, and his reigning in his glory; these are some parts of this redemption. *There shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.* O how well was it for Enoch that he walked with God, and for Noah that he was a preacher of righteousness; for Abraham that he went into a strange land and withheld not his only son; for David that he was bold, trusting only in the name of Jehovah to contend with Goliath, and became the man after God's own heart; for Daniel that he was cast into the lion's den; for Peter that he followed the Lord in his sufferings; for Paul that he, for the truth, went through unequalled afflictions, and for John that he was the companion of the faithful in their tribulation! O happy confessors, martyrs, fathers, reformers, and sufferers in every age, who, *enduring all evils* for Christ, through much

tribulation have entered the kingdom of heaven! How much better all their momentary sufferings issuing in such an everlasting glory, than this world's highest transitory gains, and pleasures, and honours, which do but end in shame and everlasting contempt!

Is there any reader of these lines, who slights all such scriptural truths as have been now set before him, I would not leave him without one more solemn warning of God: *The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* (1 Peter iv. 17, 18.) May the Lord himself apply these words to your conscience, and bring you into the number of his own believing and saved people! Whatever be our present difficulties, sacrifices, dangers, weakness and temptations—*Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.* Numbers x. 29.

Christian reader, place these things before your mind. Look not at the things seen, but at the things unseen. Come to some fixed determination in the strength of grace to be the Lord's only. Let us follow our Protestant fathers, in the part of the war now left to us, and if need be, by suffering, let us

achieve the victory both for our church, our country, and our world; the full blessedness of which will only be known and enjoyed in the *new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

*Watton Rectory, Herts,*
*March* 24, 1840.

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